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ABSTRACT

In 1986, after 2 years of preparation for merger, DeKalb Community College (DCC) became part of the University System of Georgia. One of the most important issues to be resolved before the merger was the development of the criteria for establishing a faculty ranking system and its implementation. In addition to determining minimum qualifications for initial academic appointments, it was necessary to stipulate eligibility and criteria for promotion to determine what ranks might have been achieved had ranking been in place during the more than 20 years that DCC had been in existence. Eligibility for promotion was determined on the basis of excellence in at least three of the following areas: superior teaching, outstanding service to the institution, academic achievement, professional growth and development, and outstanding service to the community. The process of determining eligibility required faculty members to complete a resume focusing on these criteria, which was submitted to a series of committees which verified the credentials and made recommendations concerning rank, to the Dean of Instruction, and to the President of the College. When the issue of rank was settled, the next items to be addressed were tenure, which was determined according to a Board of Regents policy stating that the Board cannot give tenure to faculty before they are employed by the University System; and salaries, which were brought into alignment with other Regent schools. (LAL)

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A CHANGE OF GOVERNANCE AT THE DEKALB COMMUNITY COLLEGE: CREATING AN ACADEMIC RANKING SYSTEM

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A CHANGE OF GOVERNANCE AT THE DEKALB COMMUNITY COLLEGE; CREATING AN ACADEMIC RANKING SYSTEM

by

Robert Walker and Jacque Poythress

The beginning of the 1985-86 academic year at DeKalb Community College, a multi-campus institution of 8,800 students, brought with it some degree of insecurity and anxiety. After two years of negotiations, DeKalb College was on the brink of becoming the thirty-fourth unit of the University System of Georgia to be governed by the Board of Regents. Decisions concerning several issues had been made in the process of negotiating, but some very important faculty related matters were yet to be finalized. The establishment of a ranking system, the questions of tenure, employee benefits, salary, and transfer of sick leave were yet to be addressed. This process charted new waters, because the acquisition of DeKalb College into the University System was a new procedure for all involved. All other junior colleges in the University System had entered as new junior colleges. DeKalb College, however, was allowed to merge with the University System only after the State Attorney General ruled that DeKalb College was an existing college. Board of Regents' policy prohibited any "new" colleges in the University System.

DeKalb College was established by the Georgia General Assembly under the Junior College Act of 1958. This followed the passage of a constitutional amendment and the approval of a bond referendum by the citizens of DeKalb County, Georgia. DeKalb College was Georgia's only community-operated institution because the Junior College Act specified that any college created by a local authority could operate only with the approval of the Board of Regents. However, the Act also included supplemental funding from the budget of the Board of Regents in the amount of $300 per full-time equivalent student. Because junior colleges

created under this Act had to be approved but were not governed by the Board of Regents, the subtle power struggle that existed prior to the passage of the Junior College Act continued. The result of this continued power struggle was an amendment to the Act, repealing the section on required approval and supplemental funding by the Board of Regents. This amendment placed funding responsibilities on the Georgia General Assembly where it remained until July 1, 1986, when, with the merger completed, DeKalb College became a part of the University System of Georgia. However, the two years prior to the merger were spent in developing procedures for the merger. One of the most important was the development of the criteria for establishing a ranking system and it's implementation in 1985-86.

The ranking process for an academic appointment (which carries academic rank) was developed for full-time teaching faculty, including department and division heads. The Learning Resources Center staff, administrators, and counseling and career center personnel were not ranked. All academic disciplines were represented, including the nursing, dental hygiene, and developmental studies divisions which have been a part of DeKalb College for many years. The following minimum qualifications were then set up for determining initial academic appointments as follows:

(A) Instructor: A masters degree or equivalent.

(B) Assistant Professor

(1) An earned doctorate.

(2) A masters degree plus one year (30 semester hours or 45 quarter hours) of graduate study appropriate to the discipline, and three years of successful full-time teaching experience.

(3) Masters degree and five years of successful full-time teaching experience.

(C) Associate Professor:

(1) An earned doctorate and six years of successful full-time teaching experience, at least four of which must be at the assistant professor level or above.

(2) A masters degree plus one year of graduate study appropriate to the discipline and eight years of successful full-time experience, at least four years of which must be at the assistant professor level.

(3) A masters degree and ten years of successful full-time teaching experience, at least four of which must be at the assistant professor level or above.

(D) Professor: An earned doctorate and eight years of successful full-time teaching experience, at least five of which must be at the associate professor level or above.

As all members of the DeKalb College faculty had been called instructor for varying numbers of years, it was also necessary to stipulate eligibility and criteria for promotion to determine what ranks might have been achieved had ranking been in place during the twenty plus years that the College has been in existence. This process required the faculty to first complete a resume which included an employment history; the purpose of this being to ascertain how much full-time college level teaching experience the applicant had completed, where he had acquired the experience and at what point he had earned his graduate degrees. This experience was then applied to each individual applicant as if an academic appointment system had been in place since the inception of the College. It was assumed that minimum requirements for quality of teaching and service had been met for lower level appointments, except in the case of the faculty member who had experience at an institution that already had a promotion procedure in place. It was also stipulated that the faculty member must have completed a minimum

of three years of service at DeKalb Community College to achieve promotion.

Eligibility for promotion was also considered on the basis of excellence in at least three of the following areas:

(A) Superior teaching

(B) Outstanding service to the institution

(C) Academic achievement

(D) Professional growth and development

(E) Outstanding service to the community

Under the first category, a narrative was required of a typewritten page or less which would present such evidence as the candidate possessed which could indicate the quality of teaching. (One method of reporting was to scan previous student evlauations for remarks and rankings which might indicate quality instructional performance.)

The second category of outstanding service to the institution was explained as any activity pertaining specifically to the benefit of DeKalb College such as serving on campus faculty committees, participating in special projects, personnel screening interviews, and student government advisement.

Academic achievement, of course, related to degrees, honors and special recognition, study, and publications.

The area of professional growth and development is broad in scope, including membership in professional societies, professional presentations, and attendance at local, state, and national conferences.

The final category of outstanding service to the community also has a broad interpretation which might include volunteer work, service as a community resource person, or a variety of activities in civic or social improvement. After the resume was completed, it was submitted to a Campus Ranking Committee consisting of the appropriate Division Head, Academic Dean, Campus Dean (chairperson), and two faculty members;

one from outside the candidate's division, the other elected from the candidate's colleagues. This group then reviewed the credentials for accuracy and forwarded the document to the College-Wide Academic Appointment Committee with a recommendation for rank. This body had the initial responsibility to determine in which areas the faculty member excelled and in what discipline the academic appointment should be awarded.

The Academic Appointment Committee, which was composed of members from each of the academic disciplines, were selected from faculty members who had been elected to the campus Faculty Advisory Councils by their colleagues in each division. The President appointed the committee and the chairperson. This committee then reviewed all the documents, evaluated the recommendations of respective campus committees, and looking especially at uniformity in applying criteria, provided the Dean of Instruction with a final appointment recommendation. This Dean then reviewed all preceeding recommendations and provided the President of the College with the list of recommended rank and discipline. Four days later, each faculty member was informed of their recommended rank which could be appealed to the President and a committee of six which he appointed to review all appeals. All of the steps outlined above were subject to specific dates and a timetable set by the Dean of Instruction. All appeals concerning recommended rank had to be accompanied by new information not included on resumes previously submitted. Appeals had to be filed within five working days of receipt of recommended rank. All appeals were forwarded to the Appeals Committee for review. (See Appendix A)

Their recommendations were returned to the President. If the applicant was unsatisfied, a second appeal was permitted to a new committee of three appointed by the President. Final appeals were made only to the President, and his decision was final. The President then sent all applications for employment and recommendations for rank to

the Board of Regents. The Board of Regents issued letters of "intent to hire" to those faculty members as indicated by the President. Included in each letter was a statement regarding the rank with which one would enter the University System.

When the issue of rank was settled, the next item to be addressed was tenure. The determination of this equally important issue was not as lengthy, primarily because it was not an internal decision. According to the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, the Board of Regents does not have the authority to tenure faculty before they are employed by the University System. However, the President can recommend at the time of hiring up to three years of probationary credit toward tenure, which he did for those meeting Board of Regents' Guidelines for determining probationary credit toward tenure.

(Those guidelines taken from the Board of Regents, University System of Georgia Policy Manual provides, in relevant parts as follows, see Appendix B.)

Following closely behind the issue of tenure was a pressing concern regarding salaries. The merger of DeKalb College with the Board of Regents impacted salaries in a number ways. In anticipation of the merger, a new salary scale commensurate with rank was developed. It was applicable to faculty and staff hired after July 1, 1986. The salaries on the new scale were significantly lower than those which existed prior to the merger although current faculty and staff retained their 1985-86 salary (regardless of rank). These were frozen for 1986-87. According to the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, Board of Regents' salaries must be within one-fourth of one percent of salaries in other Regent schools. However, because new faculty would be paid on the newly developed salary scale, the average salary at DeKalb College would be lowered and more comparable with salaries at other Regents schools. Additionally, employees of the Board of Regents

contributed to the Social Security System whereas DeKalb County Board of Education employees did not. The cost of medical and other employee benefits increase, though the type and amount of coverage remained the same. Finally, Board of Regents employees were not allowed to teach in excess of a full teaching load in any other University System school, including their own.

Woven closely in the merger scheme is a greater emphasis on the evaluation of the teaching faculty and it's direct affect on promotion, tenure and merit pay. Consequently, a committee on faculty evaluation was appointed in December, 1985 and charged with developing a comprehensive faculty evaluation system. This newly developed system is to be implemented Winter and Spring Quarter, 1987. The necessity of this new evaluation system was again dictated by the Board of Regents' policy regarding merit pay and promotions.

As the college enters the second quarter under the new system of governance, perhaps the anxieties experienced by the faculty have been partially alleviated by the fact that all faculty are still employed and the students see no change in the excellence of quality of instruction.

Appendix A

ACADEMIC APPOINTMENT: DEKALB COMMUNITY COLLEGE

COVER SHEET

PART A: TO BE COMPLETED BY FACULTY MEMBER

1. Name _____
2. Campus _____
3. Discipline: _____
4. Total Number of Years of Full-Time Experience _____
5. Total Number of Years of Full-Time Experience at DCC _____

_____ _____
Signature Date

PART B: TO BE COMPLETED BY CAMPUS COMMITTEE

1. Faculty Member Meets Minimum Degree and Longevity Qualifications for the academic appointment of:

   ☐ Instructor ☐ Assistant Professor

   ☐ Associate Professor ☐ Professor

2. Faculty Member Provides Evidence of Excelling in the Following Areas:

   ☐ Superior Teaching ☐ Professional Growth and Development

   ☐ Outstanding Service to the Community ☐ Outstanding Service to the Institution

   ☐ Academic Achievement

3. Faculty Member is recommended by this committee for the following academic appointment:

   ☐ Instructor ☐ Assistant Professor

   ☐ Associate Professor ☐ Professor

4. Faculty Member's academic appointment should be awarded in the following discipline:

   _____

_____ _____
Signature: Campus Dean Date

PART C: TO BE COMPLETED BY ACADEMIC APPOINTMENT COMMITTEE

Based on a review of credentials and all other criteria which may apply, this faculty member is recommended for the academic appointment of:

☐ Instructor ☐ Assistant Professor

☐ Associate Professor ☐ Professor

in the following discipline: _____ with_____

years' credit in academic appointment.

_____ _____

Chair, Academic Appointment Committee Date

PART D: TO BE COMPLETED BY DEAN OF INSTRUCTION

This faculty member is recommended for the academic appointment of:

☐ Instructor ☐ Assistant Professor

☐ Associate Professor ☐ Professor

in the following discipline: _____

_____ _____

Dean of Instruction Date

Appendix B

GUIDELINES FOR DETERMINING PROBATIONARY CREDIT TOWARD TENURE

The Board of Regents, University System of Georgia Policy Manual provides, in relevant parts, as follows:

§803.09

C. Only assistant professors, associate professors, professors who are normally employed full-time (as defined by Regents' POLICIES) by an institution are eligible for tenure... . .

D. Tenure may be awarded, upon recommendation by the President and approval by the Board of Regents, upon completion of a probationary period of at least five years of full-time service at the rank of assistant professor or higher. . . .A maximum of three years' credit toward the minimum probationary period may be allowed for service in tenure track positions at other institutions or for full-time service at the rank of instructor or lecturer at the same institution. Such credit for prior service shall be defined in writing by the President and approved by the Board of Regents at the time of the initial appointment at the rank of assistant professor or higher.

In determining the length of probationary credit toward tenure, the steps set out below should be followed in the order listed:

Step 1. Develop a basis by first identifying the year during which the individual would have qualified for the rank of Assistant Professor at DeKalb Community College. For those individuals who were determined to have come to DeKalb Community College at the Assistant Professor level or above, the year of employment at DeKalb Community College would be used as a basis. Individuals who have not yet been recommended for the rank of Assistant Professor or above are not yet eligible for probationary credit toward tenure.

Step 2. Count the number of years from the basis (Step 1) to the current year, 1986.

Step 3. Divide the resulting total by a factor of five.*.

Step 4. Round the resulting number to the nearest whole, not to exceed three (the maximium number of probationary credit years allowable.)

As an example, John Doe came to DeKalb in 1969, qualified as an Instructor. John Doe qualified for the rank of Assistant Professor in 1974.

1. Basis = 1974.
2. Years Between Basis and Current = 1986-1974 = 12
3. Divide Result by a Factor of Five = 12/5 = 2.4
4. Round Result to Nearest Whole = 2.4 = 2

1/31/86

* A factor of five was used in order to maximize the total length of service of individuals to DeKalb Community College without exceeding the maximum number of probationary credit years allowable under Regents Policies (§803.09, paragraph D.)

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